



Gareth Ward MP
Member for Kiama

Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier - Illawarra and South Coast

Ref: A1332603

Thursday, 08 October 2015

Mr Gregory Watts
President
Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 396
HELENSBURGH NSW 2508

Dear Mr Watts,

I write in my capacity as Parliamentary Secretary to the Premier for the Illawarra and South Coast regarding your letter of 7 September 2015 about internet connectivity and transport issues in Northern Illawarra. I have noted your comments and appreciate you bringing the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce's concerns to my attention. As Parliamentary Secretary for the region it is important that I hear directly from the local community about key issues facing businesses and residents in the Illawarra.

I understand from your letter that the Chamber views reliable internet connectivity and South Coast Line train timetable changes as the most pressing issues facing the Northern Illawarra community.

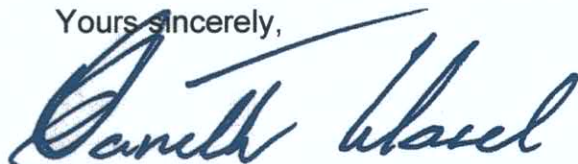
In relation to your comments about internet connectivity, I understand how crucial it is for small businesses, students and residents to have access to reliable, high speed internet in today's economic and educational environment. I note that the Chamber is concerned that residents and business owners in the 2508 postcode are having to travel outside of the area to access reliable internet. Given the importance of this issue, I have made representations to Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Australian Minister for Communications, asking him to consider your request to have the 2508 postcode immediately included in the rollout of the National Broadband Network. I have also asked Minister Fifield to provide you with a direct response on this matter.

With regards to your comments on the South Coast Line train timetable and related bus connections, you may be interested to know that I have met with the Neighbourhood Forum 3 Thirroul Transport Committee on a number of occasions to discuss community concerns about the current train timetable. Following on from these meetings I have made representations to my colleague, the Hon. Andrew Constance MP, Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, asking him to consider introducing alternate stops at Bulli and Austinmer stations on daily express services to Sydney.

I will continue to liaise with Minister Constance about this issue to ensure that it is considered as a matter of urgency within the framework of NSW Government decision making. I have also forwarded a copy of your letter to Minister Constance for consideration and a direct reply.

I hope this is of assistance. Thank you for taking the time to write to me about these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gareth Ward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gareth Ward MP
Parliamentary Secretary for the Illawarra and South Coast